

There once was a spirit who roamed the lands of Nibel.

This spirit always made good friends with all those he could, helping them in any way possible. And sometimes, the other spirits would ask him to do dangerous things, only to laugh at him afterwards.

But he didn't care. He would walk away with a smile on his face, knowing he did all he could. He knew they weren't bad. If they had a good time laughing at him, he would be happy with that.

But something happens when you try to befriend everyone. You might end up with so many friends, that you don't know which will stay by your side as time goes on. And so, as years passed and he grew older, he ended up alone.

Saddened by this, the spirit decided to journey on a new adventure. To search for who would be his best friend for life.

Many places this spirit would go, searching behind every tree and on every pond. He would ask those he encountered, but the spirit was unlucky. They already had best friends, so the spirit moved on, till he could find someone else to ask.

But alas, his efforts became fruitless. After searching on every corner of the forest of Nibel, the spirit returned to ask his father, the Spirit Tree.

-Father, why am I so alone, after giving so much to everyone?- the spirit asked to the Great Tree, afflicted by sadness and loneliness.

-Those who give everything they are, end up with nothing for themselves- the Tree answered.

-But isn't that selfish?- the spirit wondered.

-It is not... as long as you share it with those who truly are worthy of your love- the Tree responded.

After some thinking, the spirit understood. True, he did make friends. But he didn't have any. For a friend is someone you share your life with, and they also share theirs with yours. A friend is someone who is excited about your stories, as long as you feel amazement for theirs.

A friend is someone who can give, instead of just taking. And all the spirit did was to give, but never got something in return.

Days after, the forest of Nibel was struck by a Great Storm. The Spirit Tree was old, very old. And the Storm was increasing its strength, until the Tree could not hold on anymore.

Suddenly, the Light slipped away from the Tree's heart. The winds stopped blowing, the waters became still and the earth became cold.

But within that Storm, there was a lonely spirit, watching from atop the nest of the bird of summer. The Storm did not scare him, for he had weathered many before. Lost in thought, he was thinking what he could do to find a friend...

...until the answer fell from the stormy clouds, right before him.

A ball of light, blue like the glaciers of the highest mountains. It's radiance, although glimmering in a shy manner, was captivating. It did not hurt looking at it like the lightning, for it's light danced around the sphere like a wave of calmness, ever so gently.

It talked to him.

-Help me... return to the Tree...- the light said.

But the spirit did not understand the urgency of the situation.

...H-hello! What's your name?- the spirit asked, excited.

-I am... Sein- the light answered. His voice was weak, as his light.

-Don't worry Sein, I'll take you to safety- the spirit said with conviction.

Truth is, if it wasn't for the little spirit, Sein would have been lost. And under the wrath of the elements, his light might have faded away.

But the Spirit was there to look after Sein. He took him in a cave until the storm wavered. The next day, Sein regained some of their strength, but couldn't do much on their own.

The spirit took the little ball of light outside. He played with it, talked to it and told it stories.

-Sein, you see that rock over there? Dad once said it once was a fierce animal who got turned into stone for being too cruel!- the spirit told.

-How are you feeling, Sein? I hope you're getting better...- the spirit worried.

-You know, these fruits remind me of the time I got stuck in a puddle of mud for two days- the spirit recalled, laughing to what once was a terrible experience.

And even though the light could not speak back to the spirit due to how weak it was, he continued to talk to it. He continued to play, to give it affection, to give it hope...

...not knowing that, with the light away from the tree, he was dooming the forest at each passing day.

-Take me to the Spirit Tree- the light spoke one morning.

The spirit, with a radiant smile on his face, did as his new found best friend asked him to. And as they journeyed towards the heart of the forest, Sein talked to the spirit.

They got to know each other, shared stories and memories and found out their favourite colours. So many conversations they had in such a short time... The Spirit was delighted to have someone to talk to after all this time alone. And Sein found in the little spirit something he could have never found, wasn't for the Storm that took him away.

But when they reached the Tree some time later, their hearts were shocked.

The Tree was about to die.

After so many years, the Tree became frail. And with the light away for so long, the Tree was drawing its last breaths, surrounded by all the Spirits, his children.

Sein flew to the Tree. But instead of speaking, he whispered a word to the little light.

And so, the Tree decided it was time. The message was passed down. His time in this world was long and plentiful. He had no regrets.

A breeze swayed the grass and the flowers that grew in abundance all around and over the Spirit Tree. The light of the sun was caressing the trunk of the Tree, giving him comfort.

The Tree stood tall and proud, under the immense blue sky. Free at last from the shackles of the world.

His role was over.

The spirits cried for the loss of their father. Sein mourned as well. But the little spirit, the protagonist of this story, did not. Or at least, he did not reveal it. He walked away, afflicted, crying in silence, as the other spirits gathered around to comfort each other.

Dusk fell over Nibel. It was a beautiful night. The spirit remained over a hill, where he could see almost every corner of Nibel. Countless blue fireflies were dancing with the silver stars, and a pleasant breeze was swaying the trees and the flowers in what seemed to be one final requiem for the forest's protector.

Sein approached the spirit. He did not expect him to return.

-Spirit, why are you here, all alone?- Sein asked, worried.

But the spirit did not answer.

-Spirit, why won't you share your pain with me?- asked again Sein.

-Because I don't want to. I don't want to give you pain- the spirit confessed, smiling. But on his cheeks were clear trails of recent tears.

-The Tree's last words...- Sein spoke. -...were for you. He told me your name... Iuvo- he revealed.

The Spirit became emotional. Nobody could remember his name. But Sein did.

Sein remembered. And So did the Tree.

Maybe it was the Tree's decision to let go of the light, so they could meet each other. Even if it would cost his life, he only wanted his son to find a friend.

-Sein... can I be your friend?- the spirit spoke, somewhat shy, but sincerely.

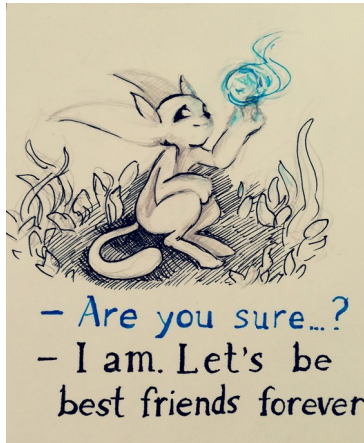
-No...- the light answered. -...I want us to be best friends!- he reassured, cheerfully.

Iuvo felt something within his chest. A feeling like no other. It was so intense that it even was difficult for him to breathe, but he could endure it. It was worth it.

Iuvo wanted to be with Sein. He did not want to lose him. And so, even knowing the outcome behind it, the Light told the spirit of a way they could be with each other... forever.

He spoke to Iuvo about the Spirit Trees. About their obligation, their duty and their sacrifice. And as the spirit remained silent, he was thinking about Sein's words. But he was not hesitating. In fact, it was all he could ever ask for.

However, Sein asked him for a final time.



And so, the little spirit who once was luvo...
...embraced the Light.